

DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation acquires two properties expanding Auburn Valley State Park

Yorklyn – DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation announced today that it has acquired 86 acres of land in Yorklyn to expand the recently-created [Auburn Valley State Park](#). The preservation of the two parcels, each about 43 acres in size, will enable future expansion of recreational activities at the 452-acre park. The new land acquisition by DNREC will also benefit the Red Clay Creek watershed by protecting important headwaters and lands along a tributary to the creek.

DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation acquired the property from the children of the Nancy Reynolds Cooch family. The sale was made possible through a donation from The Nature Conservancy in Delaware and grant funding through Mt. Cuba Center, both ensuring that the land becoming part of park will be preserved in its undeveloped state. The rest of the funds were provided by the Delaware Open Space Program, and secured by DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation.

The Open Space Program was created by the Land Protection Act in 1990, with the goal of protecting land for recreation, wildlife habitat, state forests, and lands of historical and cultural importance. Governor John Carney's 2019 budget provided \$10 million in funding for the program, which has protected more than 62,000 acres of land since its inception.

"These new properties will be a wonderful addition to the Auburn Valley State Park," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "With the land now permanently protected by DNREC, the environmentally-sensitive Red Clay Creek watershed will also

benefit. I thank our conservation partner, The Nature Conservancy in Delaware; the Reynolds Cooch family; and Mt. Cuba Center; whose support made this purchase a reality.”

“The Nature Conservancy in Delaware is honored and humbled to join Mt. Cuba Center and assist DNREC in adding the Reynolds Cooch properties to the Auburn Valley State Park complex,” said Richard Jones, executive director of The Nature Conservancy in Delaware. “Given the conservation legacy established over many years by the Reynolds and Cooch families, it is particularly gratifying to know that this important land will remain protected in perpetuity.”

The new parcels of undeveloped lands comprise a mix of hardwood forest and grasslands, and also include a stream that eventually flows into the Red Clay Creek, an important source of drinking water for New Castle County. One of the new parcels shares a border with the 121-acre Oversee Farm, another part of Auburn Valley State Park acquired with assistance from the Nature Conservancy in Delaware. Protecting an additional 86 acres provides a wildlife migration corridor through privately and publicly owned lands that extend well into Pennsylvania.